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EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.



268124

Metals

FROM/1-B

Separately, the Ohio EPA, which also inspects Master Metals, has referred its case to the Ohio attorney general, alleging hazardous-waste violations.

The U.S. EPA declined yesterday to say whether the specific violations from 1990 remain.

Sheri Bianchin, an EPA environmental engineer who has inspected Master Metals, said that "there are some continuing violations."

The Justice Department declined comment yesterday.

Officials for Master Metals could not be reached for comment. The company, however, in its court filing, disputed the allegations of violations,

mainly contending its materials are used for recycling lead and should not be treated like a "waste" material covered by the consent decree. The government contends even material for recycling is covered by the decree. The company also contends that some allegations didn't occur.

The 1990 consent decree between the company and the EPA sets stiff penalties for non-compliance, ranging from \$100 to \$2,000 a day.

Justice Department allegations against Master Metals include failure to keep proper records on hazardous materials at the plant; failure to remove certain waste piles from the site; and failure to test certain battery casings to determine if they were hazardous. Some of those casings were allegedly piled up in a corner during an inspection.

U.S. sets fines for Master Metals

By SANDRA LIVINGSTON

PLAIN DEALER REPORTER

CLEVELAND

Newly filed court documents show the U.S. Justice Department is seeking \$1.6 million in penalties from Master Metals Inc., alleging the company violated numerous environmental requirements.

The W. 3rd St. lead smelter has been at odds with environmental authorities for several years. Separately, Cleveland is moving to have the operation shut down because of what environmental officials say may be the worst airborne lead-pollution levels in the country.

In 1990, Master Metals signed a consent decree with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to correct deficiencies in the company's hazardous-materials handling. The proposed penalties stem from allegations that the company violated the decree in the first eight months of 1990.

Master Metals scavenges lead from auto batteries and other sources, melts it down and sells it.

The Justice Department initially demanded almost \$2.3 million from the secondary lead-smelting company.

Last year, Master Metals made a counteroffer of \$107,000. Then, last month, the government came back with a reduced demand of nearly \$1.6 million.

The dispute became public this month when Master Metals went to U.S. District Judge Thomas D. Lam-bros to help resolve the issue.

SEE METALS/3-B